

IDEA 2004

300.8(c)(13)

... (13) Visual impairment including blindness means an impairment in vision that, even with correction, adversely affects a child's educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness.



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Texas Requirements

- Student has met criteria as stated in 300.8(c)(13)
- Eye Report (licensed ophthalmologist or optometrist)
- Functional Vision Evaluation (Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI) or the Certified Orientation and Mobility Specialist (COMS)
- Learning Media Assessment (TVI)



Texas Administrative Code § 89.1040 Eligibility Criteria

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Texas Requirements

- Local Education Agency (LEA) ensures that a Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is made available to children with impairments

Reference: The Legal Framework:

<http://fw.esc18.net/frameworkdisplayportlet/>

- Texas Education Agency: Services to Students who are Blind or Visually Impaired

<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/guidance/vi.html>



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Before your child turns 3

- Contact the LEA
- Find out if the district has a Teacher of Students with Visual Impairments (TVI)
- Ask about services for children with visual impairments (vision/orientation & mobility)
- Work with the TVI to prepare your child as he/she transitions to the school environment
- Discuss challenges and explore solutions



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Remember...

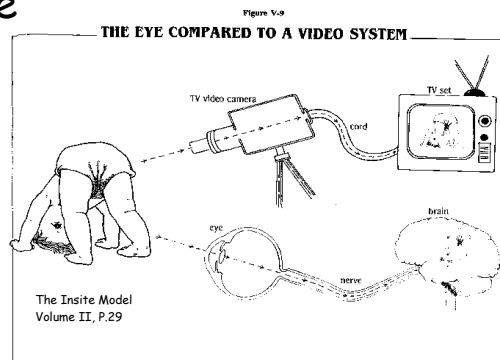
Early planning is a
must! And ...
No one is in this
alone!

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The Visual System

- Eye
- Optic nerve
- Brain



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How Everything Works

So ...

- Eye collects the impulses
- Optic nerve transmits the collected information to the brain
- Brain interprets the impulses as **sight!**

We see with our brain!



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Vision

- Primary data gathering system in people
- Provides the most information to the brain of all the senses
- Both near and distance sense



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Vision

- Integrates the information gathered by all senses
- Is the only sense that can perceive shape, color, size, distance and spatial location...at one time and at a glance



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Vision

- Primary feedback system for all of the other developing systems
 - provides feedback for practice and refinement
 - helps accumulate information to make sense of the environment



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Other Senses

- Hearing is sequential
- Hearing happens and becomes a past event
- If a sound isn't meaningful, it is noise



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Senses

- Touch is sequential and can only provide information within an arm's reach (near)
- Hearing and touch rely on the brain to combine information and create meaning



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EDUCATIONAL NEEDS




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Background Information

- Children learn differently
- They may not learn by watching
- Basic concepts may be missing or inaccurate
 - May "talk" without understanding
 - Have very limited repertoire of topics
 - Lack accuracy or depth of concept understanding
 - Likely to have misconceptions



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Background Information

- Children require specific and clearly stated instructions
- Modifications must be accurate and consistently implemented
- Frequent check for understanding is necessary... never assume
- Repetition is essential



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...or may not know that carrots are grown by planting seeds in the ground. Lessons and projects which can demonstrate such concepts are extremely useful to the visually impaired child, as they help "fill the gaps" in his/her understanding.

A child with little or no vision is not able to learn through observation and imitation in the same way as a child with good vision.



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Educational Needs

- High Expectations!
 - The inability to see well or at all does not diminish the ability to think or learn
 - Provide plenty of opportunities for your child to learn



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Educational Needs

- Activities must have a beginning, middle, end
- "Good Fairy Syndrome"
- You don't mean me!
- Children with VI may not be aware that others are busy and doing work
- They rely on auditory information



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Educational Needs

- Must learn to use their residual vision
- Must learn to understand what is under their fingers/in their hands
- Need more time and opportunities to explore visually/tactually and identify
- Must learn from real objects
 - Miniatures are meaningless
- May need to be taught to go from 3-D to 2-D to virtual



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Visual Learners

- Usually use print as literacy medium
- May use large print or regular print with a low vision aid (e.g. magnifier)
- May use assistive technology such as a video magnifier or magnification software
- Require multiple experiences to learn
- Time - extended time to complete tasks



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Tactile Learners

- Need specially adapted materials and equipment
 - Tactile and raised-line graphics
 - Braille
 - Abacus, tactile rulers, graph paper, Braille writer, slate and stylus, manipulatives, etc.
- Require multiple experiences to learn



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Strategies

- Need explanations of visual information
 - Be specific
 - Use words other than "this" and "that"
 - Pictures in books, especially if necessary to meaning
 - Events occurring at the distance
 - Student may be unaware; therefore, not interested



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Strategies

- Explain your child's low vision to the TVI and other adults in school
 - no 2 children with low vision sees in exactly the same way
 - individualized and appropriate adaptations
- Explain how your child obtains information using his/her hands and hearing



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Working with your child's teachers
and other school personnel
will be essential!

Be a contributing team member!

Why?

Because you will get
better results!



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SOCIAL SKILLS

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Social Considerations

- Teach your child to learn appropriate social behavior/customs
 - they do not learn these incidentally like their sighted peers
- Assist your child to join in socially
 - they may not/cannot see group playing
 - use peers to assist, if appropriate

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Social Considerations

- Explain
 - What is happening in the surrounding
 - Give information
 - When visitors enter or leave the house
 - When you or others leave/enter room
 - When you or others use gestures



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Social Considerations

- Remind others to identify themselves to your child
 - Unrealistic and unfair to expect your child to remember everyone's voice
- Remind others to refrain from talking about your child in front of him/her or in the presence of classmates and other adults



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Social Considerations

- Encourage appropriate behavior
 - Teach behaviors and provide opportunities to practice the behaviors
 - Reinforce good social skills
 - Give jobs and responsibilities at home
- Teach your child to help sighted peers when appropriate



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Important!!! Experience tells us...

- Expectations must be kept high
- Early intervention is critical
- Mindful and constant planning, follow-through, collaboration, and cooperation on the part of EVERYONE will be necessary



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Region 4 Services

- Include technical assistance to teachers and school districts as they provide services for students with visual impairments
- Provide low vision examinations through collaboration with the Center for Sight Enhancement
- Provide assistive technology to students and school districts



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References

- Tots 'n Tech
<http://tnt.asu.edu/home>
- Texas School for the Blind: Parents Networking Page:
<http://www.tsbvi.edu/parent-portal>
- VI Guide: Internet Resources about Visual Impairments for Parents and Teachers
<http://www.viguide.com/>



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References

- National Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (NAPVI)
<http://www.spedex.com/napvi/>
- Texas Association for Parents of Children with Visual Impairments (TAPVI)
<http://www.familyconnect.org/directory.asp?Action=profile&AccountID=4781>
- Texas Parent to Parent
<http://www.txp2p.org/index.html>



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References

- Let's Play! Projects
<http://letsplay.buffalo.edu/>
- Advisor: Assisting the Development of Visually Impairments Students through Online Resources
<http://www.e-advisor.us/>
- Texas Education Agency: Early Transition Memorandum of Understanding
<http://ritter.tea.state.tx.us/special.ed/mou/etmou.html>



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